

QUARTERLY REPORT

Second quarter FY 2000 (No. 3)

Guatemala Mitch Special Objective: Rural Economy Recovers from Mitch and is Less Vulnerable to Disasters

Summary: U.S. grant assistance under the Hurricane Mitch Special Objective (SpO) is helping Guatemala's rural economy recover from the devastation brought on by the hurricane while offering technical support and other assistance to help the rural communities both mitigate effects of the disaster and better prepare for future disasters. During the quarter ending March 31, 2000, USAID and its partners made tangible progress with reconstruction activities.

Key Intermediate Results: (1) Disaster preparedness enhanced; (2) Agricultural productivity recovered on more sustainable basis; (3) Community disease prevention and control systems strengthened.

A New Government in Guatemala and Implications for Mitch Reconstruction: Alfonso Portillo was inaugurated as President on January 14, 2000. While it was feared the wholesale change of officials throughout the government would momentarily suspend Mitch reconstruction activities, the new government proved to be quite nimble moving quickly to name most new high level officials. And once named, new ministers sought out meetings with Mitch donors as soon as possible. Key reconstruction ministries, including agriculture and health, in late January asked USAID to brief the new ministers and vice ministers on their respective portfolios including Mitch reconstruction. Hanging in the balance with the new officials at the Ministry of Agriculture was the prioritization and approval of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designs for immediate construction, i.e., before the start of the 2000 rainy season in May-June. Any delay was hardly noticeable as the Minister and his staff rapidly decided on priority designs for the current dry season. Meanwhile, in the Ministry of Health, where no decisions hung in the balance, a quick endorsement of the disease prevention measures started under the previous government was welcome news. The only area where the transition led to a palpable delay was in disaster preparedness. A new Executive Secretary for the National Council for the Reduction of Disasters (CONRED), Guatemala's national emergency management agency, was named only in mid-March. Important disaster preparedness activities were affected by this delay, especially assistance from US IAA agencies such as FEMA. Also, OFDA's Central American Mitigation Initiative (CAMI) could not be discussed with CONRED officials during this important period because of the delay in naming the new Executive Secretary.

If the election and change of government was the big news for Guatemalans, the big news for Mitch reconstruction activities was the US Government Agency and Partners meeting held in Guatemala City January 20 and 21, 2000. Organized as a team building exercise, the meeting brought together all of USAID's in-country GOG partners, NGOs and PVOs, along with U.S. Government agencies working on Mitch reconstruction under IAAs. The Mitch Special Objective's three intermediate results provided the format for the meeting with a half-day being allocated to each. Participating USG agencies, USAID partners, and GOG entities were asked to make a summary presentation of their Mitch reconstruction work plan for the two years. Participating agencies included, ANACAFE (Guatemala's national coffee growers association), CARE, CRS, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Chemonics International, the Ministry of Agriculture (and its various departments dealing with rural credit, irrigation and flood control infrastructure and improved seed production), the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), CONRED, Foundation for the Defense of Nature (FDN), FEMA, the Solar Foundation, the National Institute for Seismology, Volcanology, and Meteorology (INSIVUMEH), Foundation for Development and Conservation (FUNDAECO), NOAA/NWS, NOAA/NESDIS, Secretariat for Planning (SEGEPLAN), US

Geological Survey), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USAID/Washington/LAC/RSD, and USAID/Guatemala. In all, 70 people from 23 agencies participated.

The next such encounter is a mid-term partners meeting that will be held in September 2000, to share information on progress made to date, and a final meeting will be held in December 2001, to exchange results achievement information at the close of the Mitch program.

IR 1: Disaster Preparedness Enhanced

At the national level, a degree of uncertainty shrouded this IR during much of the quarter as the naming of a new Executive Secretary at CONRED remained on the back burner till mid-March when President Portillo made an appointment. Several short lists of candidates emerged during the quarter, listing positive and negative possibilities, and giving way to much speculation about what direction the agency would take under the various scenarios. The delay did have an adverse affect on USAID Mitch assistance. The vision for a decentralized national emergency management system held by the outgoing Executive Secretary, was suspended, and USAID resources intended for strengthening the CONRED system at the national level remained unprogrammed during the quarter. Similarly, an assessment team from FEMA was unable to satisfy its wish of hearing about what the national system might look like from the perspective of a CONRED Executive Secretary, and had to settle for a mid-management level opinion. Also, OFDA, with its Central America Mitigation Initiative program finally reaching a state of clarity, could not be discussed with CONRED officials.

At the local level, however, advances were made during the quarter. The naming of a new Executive Secretary had little impact on either CRS' and CARE's agendas to develop local capacity to plan for and manage disasters. Both agencies continued to contact target communities, initiate training activities, and to prepare for working with local committees.

The technical management unit (MU) of the GOG/donor coordinating group for Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation formed that was formed in the previous quarter, met with less regularity due to the Executive Secretary issue. Resources committed to the MU through CEPREDENAC (Swedish origin) to defray the costs of three persons that would man the MU full time, a manager, deputy projects manager, and a institutional coordinator, about \$100,000, were held in abeyance until the new Executive Secretary was named. The funds are renewable a second year. A two-year life span for the MU would be consistent with the bulk of Mitch reconstruction resources being made available to Guatemala's reconstruction.

Key Intermediate Results: (1) Mapping, data collection, and targeting most vulnerable communities; (2) community organizations strengthened; (3) CONRED network strengthened.

Performance and Prospects: President Portillo appointed Alejandro Maldonado, as new Executive Secretary of CONRED on March 15, 2000. While advances at the national level for this IR were affected during the two and half months the decision hung in the balance, progress at the local level was made. For all intents and purposes, this IR is on track. Both CARE and CRS continued their community-level work. CARE is targeting 25 communities in 5 municipalities, and CRS is focusing on establishing disaster prevention and coordination committees in 100 communities. All are within flood vulnerable areas affected by Mitch.

During the quarter, CRS made good progress toward its target of helping 100 communities develop disaster-coordinating committees. Work at the community level was initiated during the quarter, and this momentum is expected to build appreciably over the coming months. CRS activities completed in the quarter include:

- With CONRED providing the framework and instructors, organized a training of trainers for 15 CRS personnel on organization, prevention and reduction of disasters. The objectives of the training were (a) strengthen the participants capacity to respond to disasters, and (b) and prepare the participants to repeat the training to community groups constituting Local Disaster Coordinating Committees.
- With CONRED, made plans for a second round of training for the same 15 CRS participants to reinforce and build on the earlier training.
- Signed an agreement with a local NGO working in Izabal department, FUNDAECO, who will provide training and organization work at community level in Izabal.

- Participated in various coordination meetings with CONRED, NOAA, CARE, INSIVUMEH, and the University of San Carlos, to define work areas and to begin the selection process for the location of NOAA's ALERT flood early warning system.
- CRS' coordinator for Disaster Preparedness attended a 4-day OFDA training in Guatemala on Damage Assessment and Emergency Needs Evaluation.
- Defined a strategy for the education process at the community level: (which consists of organizing and strengthening community coordination committees that will be headed by Local Emergency Coordinators. CRS Community Facilitators will train Local Emergency Coordinators over a period of 3 to 4 weeks in:
 - Importance of Community Organization
 - Potential threats that affect Guatemala
 - The Disaster Cycle
 - Emergency Plan development, and if time permits, training will include:
 - Evacuation Route planning and signaling
 - Simulation of community evacuation.
- The organization of Local Disaster Coordinating Committees was initiated in 10 communities.

CARE also made progress during the period. Their results included:

- Contacted potential consultants to implement scopes of work to collect basic information on communities and develop vulnerability maps for the five municipalities. (No decision was made regarding the use of a consultant. An alternative is to meet with CONRED staff and apply its criteria to vulnerability mapping. That way, CARE using its own staff could carry out the vulnerability mapping without incurring the additional cost of a consultant).
- Held coordination meetings with CRS, World Neighbors, the five target municipalities, and department governments, to clarify geographic working areas.
- Coordinated with CONRED's departmental representative from Alta Verapaz to understand how the CONRED system is legally established and functions from the national level down to the local level.
- Developed a training plan for a series of workshops that includes: (a) preparing communications networks, (b) assessing risk at community level, (c) assessing vulnerability at community level, (d) developing hazard maps, (e) preparations for disasters, (f) interpretation of hazard maps, (g) use of images. The plan needs to be coordinated with CONRED and vetted with their training division. Unlike CRS, CARE has yet to establish a training and capacity building relationship with CONRED.

Almost all the \$1.0 million budgeted to this IR have been programmed. Only a \$100,000 intended for IR 1.1 mapping, data collection, and targeting most vulnerable communities, and IR 1.3, CONRED network strengthened remains to be committed. Now that the new Executive Secretary at CONRED has been named, programming decisions are expected to come quickly. Specific uses haven't been defined but are likely to be for the purchase of office, computer and communications equipment for the national CONRED system, and possibly for complimentary training and logistical activities.

US agencies with IAAs, NOAA, USGS and FEMA also advanced their work during the quarter. NOAA/National Weather Service, along with the USGS, met with CONRED, CARE, CRS and INSIVUMEH to discuss site selection for its ALERT early flood early warning system in the Motagua and/or Polochic valleys. Two or three systems will be installed. The site selection will be finalized in the upcoming quarter, but actual installation of the systems won't take place until the 2001 rainy season due to how NOAA has budgeted its IAA resources. Most of its equipment purchase including the flood early warning systems is scheduled for the second year of the IAA. Site selection and other preparatory work will take place during 2000. USGS is supporting the effort with the installation of at least two stream gages that will be connected to the NOAA flood early warning systems.

A FEMA reconnaissance team visited Guatemala in late-February. The team, led by the agency's deputy chief of staff, had hoped to meet with high level Government of Guatemala officials. However, at the time of their visit the change of government and the ongoing process of naming officials was still underway so the team had to settle for meetings with mid-level management at CONRED and at other government agencies. The team was able to meet with CARE and CRS officials implementing their respective disaster

preparedness components, and with OFDA's regional coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, who was in Guatemala on other USAID business. In the end, with the contacts made while in Guatemala, the team was able to collect enough information to sharpen the focus of their workplan. As discussed with the OFDA regional coordinator, FEMA, could provide CONRED valuable input for a strengthened national system by replicating in Guatemala its successful Project Impact experience.

The USGS aerial photography contracted through the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) for Guatemala is 95 percent complete. With but 50 frames to take along the Guatemala-Honduras the border, the completed photography will provide the basis for the development of landslide and volcano hazard maps.

OFDA continued to advance work on its Central America Mitigation Initiative (CAMI). During the quarter, OFDA/Washington made a decision on an approach to channeling its \$11 million CAMI assistance to the region, and especially to the four countries most affected by Mitch (Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador). In its earlier draft assessment report circulated in October 1999, OFDA suggested an approach that would focus more on the region as opposed to individual USAID missions. The new approach taken by OFDA/Washington adopts a three-tier mechanism that emphasizes six overarching objectives addressing both national and regional concerns for strengthening emergency systems and risk reduction. The three tiers provide opportunities to US PVOs, to US Government agencies, and to USAID missions. The combination provides for missions to shape national programs that reinforce, extend or expand existing disaster mitigation activities, as well as support innovative proposals

R 2: Agricultural Productivity Recovered on More Sustainable Basis

This IR is helping small farmers in the northern and eastern departments of Alta Verapaz, Izabal, Zacapa, Chiquimula, El Progreso and northern Quiche recover lost agricultural production capacity at the same time making it more sustainable and resistant to future climatic events. Activities include river channel modification and flood protection infrastructure, rehabilitation of small irrigation systems, land stabilization activities, rehabilitation of farm to market roads, and improved natural resource management including reforestation in the upper watershed areas of the Polochic and Motagua watersheds.

Key Intermediate Results: (1) River, land and small scale irrigation systems rehabilitation, (2) Polochic and Motagua watershed management, (3) Seed recovery and multiplication, (4) Microenterprise recovery and credit, (5) Rural road repair in Ixcán, Quiché, and Alta Verapaz.

Performance and Prospects: Mitch SpO funding for this IR was originally \$24 million. During the quarter, USAID requested from LAC an additional \$5 million that would be applied to the construction of irrigation rehabilitation and land and flood protection infrastructure. Even with the expanded resources, this IR will program its work through its original list of partners. These include CARE, the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture (MAGA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the National Coffee Producers Association (ANACAFE), the National Rural Development Bank (BANRURAL), the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), and Chemonics International.

Implementation is on track for this IR. All major partners made important progress during the quarter.

IR 2.1 River, land and small scale irrigation systems rehabilitation

USAID partners working to achieve results in this IR include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Ministry of Agriculture-Cipreda (MAGA-Cipreda), the National Coffee Growers Association (ANACAFE), and CRS.

Under its PASA, the USACE has made very good progress in the quarter. As reported last quarter, USACE had prepared a list of 22 projects for immediate implementation, i.e., projects that could be implemented during the 2000 dry season (January to June). During this quarter, further refinement of that list led to combining some projects and the postponement of others to 2001 narrowing to 10 the number of projects for the 2000 dry season. Available funding will determine how many of these projects actually get implemented. At present, the arrangement calls for USACE to develop designs under its PASA, and MAGA-Cipreda to implement them under its grant agreement with USAID. USACE is also providing MAGA technical assistance to review bids from contractors and some construction supervision. This will help expedite both a prompt startup of projects and ensure quality control at completion.

In January, just after the new government took office, MAGA prioritized USACE's list of 10 projects and prepared solicitations for the top two, the Santa Lucia Irrigation project, cited in last quarter's report, at an estimated cost of \$870,472, and the CA10 Highway at La Playa, estimated at \$670,000. MAGA expects the Santa Lucia project to be awarded for work to begin April 17, 2000, with a construction time line of 60 days. When completed in June 2000, this rehabilitated irrigation facility will restore service to 10,000 small farmers irrigating a total of 28,000 acres. The CA10 Highway project, which will protect this important commercial highway from further erosion by the Motagua River, will be awarded shortly thereafter and will also be completed on or around the end of June 2000. The solicitations for the remaining eight priority projects, all of which are smaller than the first two, are expected to come quickly.

Also during the quarter, USACE completed a site inspection of the Polochic valley. Up to now, USACE has focussed exclusively on the Motagua river basin. The site inspection identified 36 "problems/opportunities" that include landslides, bridge and culvert needs, urban and agricultural flooding,

irrigation needs, streambank erosion, and water treatment needs. In consultation with local authorities and with MAGA, priority is likely to be given to the urban flooding problems and especially community pair situations on opposite banks of the Polochic River, such as La Playa Polochic and Sam Greene. There are several such community pairs and each community prefers a solution that is in direction opposition to its pair.

USAID has requested USAID/Washington/LAC for an additional \$5million to augment resources available for implementation of USACE infrastructure designs under IR2. Resources already made available to MAGA-Cipreda under its grant agreement are insufficient to construct all the USACE designs. Approximately \$1.030 million remain in IR 2 for commitment, and these resources will be added to MAGA-Cipreda's existing grant agreement. With the addition of \$5.0 million more, it is estimated that a majority of the USACE designs for both the Motagua and the Polochic river basins could be implemented.

ANACAFE, under this IR, is assisting communities in Alta Verapaz rehabilitate coffee plantations through the provision of credit, training, and development of coffee plant seedbeds. This work is still in the planning stage with initial contact being made with communities. ANACAFE is directing this component of its assistance available under its cooperative agreement to women in the community of Muyha.

CRS is targeting four objectives for this IR, (1) sustainable management of soil, water and forest resources in 25 micro-watersheds, (2) improve crop productivity of 3,000 hectares damaged by Mitch, (3) promote land tenure security in 100 communities to contribute to sustainable management of soil, water and natural resources, and (4) improve income generating capacity of 3,000 farm families.

Quarter achievements under its first objective include:

- a) Finalized the selection of 27 micro watersheds.
- b) Identified 160 target communities.
- c) Initiated staff training on watershed management.

Quarter achievements under its second objective include:

- a) Activities are to be carried out in the same watersheds and communities selected in the first objective.

Quarter achievements under its third objective include:

- a) Activities are to be carried out in the same watersheds and communities selected in the first objective.

Quarter achievements under its fourth objective include:

- a) Activities are to be carried out in the same watersheds and communities selected in the first objective.

IR 2.2 Polochic and Motagua watershed management

CARE and MAGA-Cipreda are the two partners working under this IR. CARE is programming a significant share of its resources under this IR, and MAGA-Cipreda will be implementing one or more flood and/or irrigation infrastructure designs in the Polochic valley that will be finalized by USACE.

CARE, one of the largest partners, has two objectives: (1) rehabilitating agricultural and watershed areas through reforestation and improved natural resource management in 270 communities along the Polochic and Cahabon river valleys and their tributaries; and (2) assisting 10,800 farming families from 270 communities in the departments of Alta and Baja Verapaz adopt soil conservation, agroforestry and diversified agricultural techniques. Under its first objective CARE is targeting 8 results. A quarterly summary achievements includes:

- 1) Work with five municipalities (Note: a municipality is a county seat-like jurisdiction) to develop land use planning maps – scopes of work were published and bids are being prepared from three firms to carry out this work,
- 2) Develop an environmental education program for primary school kids in 52 schools – materials development is underway;

- 3) Develop a municipal strategy for forest fire prevention and control – municipal level courses and promotional activities in collaboration with the National Forest Institute (INAB) have been initiated and are underway;
- 4) Develop forest management plans in four intervention municipalities including identifying and training a municipal forestry technician – mayors have been contacted;
- 5) Develop a training program for municipal forestry technicians – a 9-module course to be given over 3 days was developed in collaboration with INAB;
- 6) Develop a reforestation incentive scheme for 669 hectares in 270 communities paying \$488,185 to 2,851 families who will also plant 712,750 multipurpose (pine, cyprus, maple) trees – boundaries in micro watersheds were determined and community promotional process was initiated in 180 of the target communities and contracting of seeding producers was completed;
- 7) Rational use of forest resources is adopted by 2,851 families – an integrated training program has been started training 63 municipal forestry extensionists (paid by the municipality with CARE/Cooperative Agreement funds) and 470 community volunteers in forestry;
- 8) Strengthen the capacity of the 15 municipal governments in the two Verapaz departments in natural resource management – an analysis of local government knowledge of national conservation laws was completed and a training proposal for three workshops with a focus on municipal registries, project administration, watershed management, and territorial ordering was prepared.

Under its second objective CARE is targeting 2 results. A quarterly summary of achievements includes:

- 1) The adoption of reforestation by 5,680 families who will plant 1,424,300 coffee, macadamia, cacao, citrus, and pepper trees – boundary areas were determined, community promotion initiated, species of trees to be distributed identified, and contracting producers of seedlings was completed.



Pine Seedling Production

CARE has contracted out the production of tree seedlings for reforestation activities in the Polochic and Cahabon. This facility at Tucaru in the Polochic valley is producing 500,000 pine seedlings that will be distributed to families in the Polochic valley during the 2000 rainy season from May to November. In addition to the 2,851 families who will benefit from this reforestation incentive program, the production facility directly employs 47 people from the Tucaru area who are learning tree seedling production and reforestation by doing.

- 2) Soil conservation techniques imparted to 1,340 families – these activities depend on agreements with municipal governments for the hiring of municipal extension workers who will be carrying out the end-use training – agreements were drafted during the quarter.

Under this IR, MAGA-Cipreda is budgeting some of its grant agreement for the implementation of USACE designs in the Polochic river basin. USACE completed a site inspection visit during the quarter. USACE will complete a reconnaissance report by May 2000. After submission of the reconnaissance report to

MAGA and USAID, which will include recommended projects, USACE will carry out a feasibility study based on MAGA and USAID feedback. The completed feasibility report is targeted for September. Any projects would be carried out at earliest in 2001.

IR 2.3 Seed recovery and multiplication

The Ministry of Agriculture, through Cipreda and its technology unit ICTA, is the partner for this IR. MAGA-Cipreda-ICTA signed a project implementation letter for \$1.0 million for seed recovery and multiplication. During the quarter, MAGA-Cipreda-ICTA were beginning the implementation of the program which will bring improved seed to 17,000 producers who lost seed stocks during Mitch. Through cooperation with private seed reproducers and PVOs such as CARE and CRS, MAGA is reproducing and disseminating ten varieties of corn, six varieties of rice, six varieties of bean, five varieties of potato, and one variety of sesame.

IR 2.4 Microenterprise recovery and credit

- MAGA-Banrural is the main partner for the \$2.0 million provided under a project implementation letter. During the quarter the MAGA- Banrural extended FUNDAECO \$65,000 and Talita Kumi \$520,000 for new micro enterprise credits in Izabal and Alta Verapaz departments respectively.

IR 2.5 Rural road repair in Ixcán, Quiché, and Alta Verapaz

ANACAFE, under its \$3.0 million Cooperative Agreement is the largest partner for this IR. During the quarter, ANACAFE prepared requests for proposals for roadwork that were sent to five contracting firms. Under this component, ANACAFE is also financing other coffee rehabilitation efforts in the Alta Verapaz department that include training centers, radio communications network to help maintain coffee growers informed on prices and market conditions and the system will also support the CONRED national disaster preparedness system, and the reconstruction of coffee cleaning mills destroyed or damaged by Mitch. Planning work was advanced on all these activities in the quarter.

Through its \$1.95 million Cooperative Agreement, CHF is rehabilitating rural roads and bridges in Ixcán. The works include replacement of two bridges, Cantabal (20 meters length) and Primavera (20 meters length), and rehabilitation of the 45.1 Km road between Cantabal and Tres Ríos (a community located northeast of Cantabal near the Guatemala/Mexico border). The Cantabal bridge will reestablish the commercial exchange between Alta Verapaz and Ixcán (Cantabal is the Municipal capital of Ixcán) through the Franja Transversal del Norte (FTN), a road connecting the northern part of Alta Verapaz, Quiché and Huehuetenango departments) which is the only way out for goods and people from Ixcán. The Petrolero Bridge, also on the FTN, will help reestablish normal traffic flow between Cantabal and some 35 communities. Rehabilitation of the road between Cantabal and Tres Ríos (which includes replacement of two bridges) will benefit around 45 communities.

The only IAA relationship in this IR is with the USDA/Forest Service. During the quarter the Forest Service advanced activities under both its fire management and watershed rehabilitation work plan components. For two weeks in February, a Forest Service fire specialist visited the Sierra de las Minas biosphere reserve managed by the Fundacion de Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN), to train thirty FDN staff in basic fire behavior and fire suppression. The FDN staff in turn trained thirty members of fire brigades hired by FDN in the techniques. The brigades, hired using USDA/Forest Service Mitch IAA resources, will provide three months of full-time surveillance in 2000 (March through May), and again in 2001. As part of the training, both FDN staff, and then the brigades had to prepare for and carry out a prescribed burn as one tool to control fires in the reserve. Annually, 20 to 30 fires cause significant hillside and forest damage leading to erosion and landslides. In addition to the basic fire management training and implementation of two prescribed burns in the biosphere reserve, the FDN staff also received guidance on the preparation of a Fire Management Plan for the reserve. The plan will take several months to complete and will include the use of fire suppression and prescribed burning in the reserve.



Understanding fire behavior and fire suppression are two of the objectives the USDA/Forest Service wishes to impart to brigades in the Sierra de las Minas biosphere reserve. This prescribed burn, held in February, is a training exercise for 30 brigade members from nearby villages to burn along a ridge top to establish a firebreak. The ridgeline will continue to be burned as pretreatment to the upcoming fire season in April and May during which time an average of up to 30 fires that leave hillsides vulnerable to erosion and landslides occur.

The USDA/Forest Service also fielded a watershed management team during the quarter that worked with FDN on rehabilitation of damaged areas of the Jones watershed. Objectives of that visit included: (a) initiated collection of basic hydrologic, soil, climatic and vegetative, spatial and tabular data of the watershed, (b) identified site-specific land use threats and rehabilitation projects, and (c) completed information needs assessment, selected technology and locations to support watershed information network.

A task order under the RAISE IQC with Chemonics International was signed under this IR to provide technical assistance in the development of an electronic digitized geographic monitoring system for USAID/Guatemala Mitch activities being implemented under all three Intermediate Results. The geographic monitoring system will give USAID the ability to track results achievement progress of all Mitch activities in the three IRs by geographic region and by implementing partner. In addition, Chemonics is also providing specialized technical assistance in best watershed management practices for agriculture and forest lands directed at activities in IR2.

IR 3: Community Disease Prevention and Control Systems Strengthened

Summary: The SpO's health component supports the prevention and control of infectious diseases, mainly diarrhea, cholera, dengue and malaria, in selected regions of the country. USAID's support is strengthening local disease surveillance and promoting better household health practices that inhibit disease transmission. The construction and rehabilitation of water and sanitation services in communities affected by Mitch complement these actions.

Key Intermediate Results: (1) Local malaria prevention and control programs strengthened, (2) Household water and sanitation programs established in selected areas, and (3) Capacity to prevent and control infectious diseases enhanced.

Performance and Prospects: This IR is on track. The change of government officials in January was not disruptive, and in fact, the new authorities have shown a keen interest in the program. For example, the dengue fever component, IR 3.3, which had been pending under the last government, was picked up immediately by the new Ministry of Health officials and a plan is being developed. The CDC's malaria prevention and control program encountered a short delay when USAID initiated its request for source-origin waivers for the British-manufactured insecticide Lambda Cyhalothrin and for the bed netting material. The delay meant the program was unable to begin in the field during the beginning of the peak mosquito season in January. However, work was initiated in March, and the program is moving ahead, and CDC is confident that the planned interventions will have a significant impact on malaria incidence in the target area.

CARE and CRS, principal partners in this IR for water and sanitation activities, continued to move ahead with their respective work plans.

IR 3.1 Local malaria prevention and control programs strengthened

Accomplishments during the quarter in the malaria component are related to project design and start-up. MERTU-CDC is the main partner in this sub-IR. Their summary of activities includes:

- Additional fieldwork carried out with candidate bed net villages (up to 29 are to be selected). Insecticide treated nets are the main element of this community-based intervention to reduce malaria transmission.
- Obtained source-origin waiver for bed netting material.
- Solved the source-origin waiver issue for insecticide - amount is less than \$5,000.
- MERTU/G-CDC contracted with a local women's microenterprise group in Ixcán to manufacture bed nets in large scale.

IR 3.2 Household water and sanitation programs established in selected areas

CARE and CRS are the principal partners in this sub-IR with a technical support role being played by CDC. USAID is coordinating activities and has been successful in promoting the startup and continuation of meetings between its Mitch Partners and also with other donors involved in water and sanitation outside of Mitch reconstruction.

The "Partners Council on Household Water and Sanitation" that was established in 1999, continued to meet on a monthly basis. This group brings together USAID's water and sanitation partners including CARE, CRS, MERTU/CDC, and the MOH to coordinate Mitch water and sanitation activities.

Apart from the Partners Council, an Inter-Institutional group made up of other donors and agencies involved in water and sanitation issues beyond Mitch reconstruction has been meeting since January about

once every three weeks. This group includes USAID and its Mitch partners as well as PAHO, UNICEF, the European Union, the MOH and INFOM (Instituto de Fomento Municipal), the GOG agency charged by law to monitor water and sanitation projects.

CARE

CARE's overall objective for this IR is by August 2001 to have reduced by 15% the prevalence of diarrheal diseases in children less than 5 years of age, in 14 rural communities in 5 Municipalities of Alta and Baja Verapaz.

To achieve this result, CARE will increase the availability of community water systems and latrines to a total 6,029 beneficiaries (1,176 families). Also, CARE will, by August of 2001, increase the number of households that adopt adequate hygiene practices.

CARE will be constructing 12 water systems that will serve 14 communities (with 2 systems each serving 2 communities) and building 1,176 latrines. All 12 systems and the latrines will be started during 2000. The communities are distributed as follows: The Department of Alta Verapaz:

Municipality of Panzos;

1. Punta de rieles Lagatos
2. Sepur limite
3. Sepón

Municipality of Tucuru;

4. Sehacoy
5. Rubelzul

Municipality of Tamahú;

6. Chipacay
7. Chimolón Sector II

Municipality of Chamelco:

8. Sotzil * (*will share one system)
9. Cojila*
10. Seoguis
11. Chicujal

The Department of Baja Verapaz;

Municipality of Purulhá;

12. El Renacimiento * * (** will share one system)
13. Vega Larga **
14. La Pinada

Visits to the water sources which will supply the 12 systems were carried out in order to determine their location, their capacity during rainy season and dry season and to inspect the quality of water produced by the source. In addition, CARE advanced the work to obtain signed agreements of responsibility with 5 of the 14 communities. The agreements establish not only the roles of the various parties, but also make legal the establishment of a bank account under department and municipal rules that each community water committee will use for fee collection and system maintenance.

Topographical and design work is underway for all 12 of the systems. CARE hopes to have this work advanced enough during the upcoming quarter to allow it to purchase all of the materials needed for construction and have them placed in the communities by the end of June 2000. Construction work in the initial 5 communities for which legal agreements already exist should be underway in June.

The baseline and hygiene knowledge, attitudes, and practices survey startup was delayed due to unavailability of the contractor hired to carry out the task. However, this will not retard startup of the water systems. Hygiene education will begin when water system and latrine construction is underway.

CRS

CRS' overall objective for this IR is to reduce the incidence of diarrheal disease, especially in children under five years of age, by improving household water and sanitation conditions, and hygiene knowledge and practices.

In pursuit of this objective, CRS' expected results for CY 2000 are: (a) complete a diarrhea incidence baseline and hygiene knowledge, attitudes, and practices survey; (b) construct/rehabilitate 10 small community water systems; (c) construct/rehabilitate 175 wells; (d) construction/rehabilitate 700 latrines; (e) distribute 2,000 water receptacles with disinfectant.

For this IR, CRS is working with three local counterparts, the Social Pastorate of Ixcán, the Social Pastorate of the Verapaces, and Caritas of Zacapa.

CRS provides technical supervision and guidance to the counterparts in addition to the financial resources and materials to carry out the work.

This quarter, CRS initiated the implementation of its baseline survey, and will complete it early next quarter. CDC, through the "Partners Council on Household Water and Sanitation," helped CRS define the sample size and related survey protocols.

CRS is purchasing materials for water, well and latrine construction, and hopes to have the materials in communities by May or June, with construction beginning immediately. (CRS has been completing some infrastructure work started with OFDA funds after the Mitch emergency phase and also using their own CRS funds).

With CDC assistance, CRS defined the kind and use of a 5-gallon water receptacle for distribution to rural households where gravity flow water systems are not a solution for potable water supply. Also with CDC assistance, and in collaboration with CARE, CRS defined a protocol for monitoring water quality in the systems and in homes using the 5-gallon receptacle.

CDC

As external advisor for CRS and CARE, MERTU/G-CDC has continued assisting in establishing the parameters, processes and outcome indicators, and methodologies for the baseline surveys and for monitoring water quality.



Water Safety

For widely disbursed rural households whose water sources are contaminated streams and rivers, cholera and diarrheal disease are ever-present threats. Treating water at the household level offers one solution to ensure safety. The CDC is working with CRS to define a program using a 5-gallon receptacle, as shown in this house in Zacapa, that includes a training protocol for applying chlorine in the home, and a water quality monitoring component. This CDC/CRS partnership is helping 2000 households achieve access to safe drinking water.

IR 3.3 Capacity to prevent and control infectious diseases enhanced

- The previous government showed no interest in going forward with the dengue activity. However, when the new government assumed office in January 2000, the new Ministry of Health authorities moved quickly to convene a strategy session with CDC personnel. A strategy is under development and CDC fully expects to be implementing it during the upcoming quarter.